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AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

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JULY MEETING: Following the precedent established last year, there will be no meeting of the Association indoors this month.

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JULY FIELD TRIP will be taken on Sunday, July 17, to Big Lagoon, via Muir Woods; returning via Coyote Creek and the old rifle range to Manzanita; distance, 12 miles. Purchase round trip tickets to Mill Valley. Take Sausalito Ferry, 8:15 a. m. Bring lunch and canteens. In event of rain falling at this hour, trip will be postponed to 24th.

This trip affords a beautiful walk and has invariably been interesting from an ornithological standpoint, affording, as it does, three distinct classes of habitat, bay, ocean and land. Leaders, Messrs. Thomas and George Wright.

* * *

PROCEEDINGS OF THE JUNE MEETING: The fifty-third regular meeting of the Association was held on June 9th, in the Ferry Building, with President Kibbe in the chair; Mrs. C. R. Smith acting as secretary; thirty members and guests in attendance.

Mr. Lastreto reported transmission of resolution approving the establishment of a park and refuge on Mt. Diablo, and also the fact of the approval by the Governor of the enabling act.

The meeting authorized the omission of regular meeting in July, and on motion of Mrs. Kibbe, a resolution was adopted expressing the appreciation of the Association of the hospitality of the California Development Board, in providing a place of meeting for nearly four years. As the space occupied by the Lecture Hall is required by the State Harbor Board for other purposes, future meetings of the Association will be held elsewhere, and various suggestions were made and are being investigated by members during the present month. *All reports on this subject should be in the hands of the President not later than July 25th, for action by the Board in time for the August meeting.*

Following the disposal of necessary business, the meeting was addressed by Miss Loriol M. V. Lamoureux on the subject of "My Robin Colony." In describing her experiences, Miss Lamoureux introduced a phase of bird lore quite new to the Association, and held the attention of everyone present with her most interesting discourse. In lieu of a resumé of her remarks, Miss Lamoureux has favored us with what may be termed a supplementary article, which we take pleasure in presenting to our members herein.

* * *

COMPANIONSHIP WITH BIRDS

"Indeed, it is not too much to say that, without birds, the earth would not long be habitable."—Frank M. Chapman.

John Burroughs says that birds belong to the poets as to no one else, because it is only the true poetical temperament that fully responds to them. No one can associate intimately with bird life, which seems to be at the top

of Life's scale, without greater unfoldment and enrichment and tenderness. No other life element suggests to us so much lightness, happiness and freedom and the value of these in human relationships.

One year I resided in the country alongside a large estate which was a veritable paradise for dumb creatures and for the sky creatures. The spacious wooded sections offered shelter and orchestral halls for the flight birds, and the ponds provided a rare playground for the aquatic birds, while broad fields and splendidly equipped coops and runs gave delight to prize fowl, chickens, turkeys and pheasants, and at one time a noisy peacock shared the luxurious quarters. "Comedy Farm," I named the place, for I spent hours laughing over the antics of those feathered artists.

In this sylvan retreat I passed favored hours of real joy with much of the life of the open, and

"Glorious nights of shades and dews and bliss.
Where a silent 'chantress ruled the peaceful groves
Still ng nature with her kiss."

The frogs sang, "jump-in, jump-in; go-round, go-round"; the katydids had contests with the crickets,—"she-did, she-did; she-didn't, she-didn't"; while the crickets retorted, "quit-it, quit-it," but how they made out I never knew, for the immeasurable undercurrent of stillness always soothed me to sleep until the dawn, when I awoke to the hum of myriads of insects, the gentle whirring wings of the tiny folk blending with the first peepings of awakening birds. While it was barely dawn I would hear the last notes of the nightingale, with its minor raptures. Soon the larks and orioles began their songs, spontaneous and mystical; the blackbird and throstle, unstudied, natural and direct, until all the woodland multitude sang in chorus, sibilant and melodious,—

"Up with me, up with me, into the clouds,
For thy song, lark, is strong.
Up with me, up with me, into the clouds,
Singing, singing;
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me, till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!"

Sweet friends of the air! All appreciative little optimists, but my oneness with them in the open has taught me less than I have learned since caring for them in my aviaries. All birds have something to teach those who would learn of them, even the swooping birds of prey, the hawks, eagles and vultures; the milder birds, such as the storks, cranes and gulls; and the darting, daring swallows, do they not help us to discern the untamed in nature and teach us patience with moods?

Some people question the possibility of developing a bird beyond its natural capacity when it is a house pet, comparatively free in a large aviary. The answer is problematic, because it is impossible to determine the bird's natural capacity for intelligible expression in the open, owing to the difficulties of establishing a familiarity sufficient to draw out its free, fearless expression which is necessary in order to gain a true estimate of the bird's nature, but one may say conservatively that one discovers in pets in an aviary that they possess an intelligence and appreciation little imagined by the prejudiced or disinterested. Birds belong to the vastness and the free spaces of air, and in their realm of air they symbolize much to man, and no one is justified in taking them away from the open except in cases where the study of them is for the purpose of revealing to man the glorious and elevating symbolism of their attributes.

"Sweet bird! Thy bower is evergreen;
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year."

Birds may teach us optimism, poise, love, beauty and harmony, and reveal the divine in all nature to us in invisible ways. Emerson shows the chickadee to be both a hero and a philosopher. Many legends declare the

robin to be a messenger of love and devotion and compassion. Mrs. Thaxter reveals to us the flitting sandpiper, skimming along the sea, as fearless and faithful. The humming birds are symbolic of soul and eternity. The bluebirds are emblematic of happiness and cheeriness. When once a swallow built its nest in the chimney of my studio apartment, the janitor who discovered it came to me and said: "I have good news for you, lady; there is luck coming to the house for the swallows have chosen the chimney cornice for their nesting and safe it will be from the sparks, too."

The birds have a language which is very expressive and intelligible to those who have a deep, affectionate, affinity with them.

My especial companionship with birds has been evolved through my caring for them in rescue work. For many years I have rendered them some service by buying the sick ones that I would find in the markets and stores and, of course, I always accept all wild birds that may be brought to me when they have met with accidents. The wild birds I generally free as soon as they are healed. A few I have kept, owing to their attachment for me and their stubbornness in disdaining the food of the out-of-doors and preferring the luxuries of my care. This attitude could result only in early starvation or slaughter by dogs or cats, so it became the greater kindness to keep them as pets in my aviary. My patients that have preferred living with me have included an oriole, blackbirds, woodpeckers, finches, robins and a song sparrow. Altogether I have cared for nearly three hundred birds in my rescue work and have lost very few of them. I find congenial homes for those I cannot keep and always take them back if they seem to miss me after they go to the new home. I have had merry, joyous, Japanese robins; meddlesome, but well meaning, Japanese sparrows; the dancing Japanese nuns of merry nature which is quite incongruous with their apparent solemnity. The gentle black-capped capucine finch of the eastern isles is a comedian with his strange song method, which resembles mal de mer. The wee, wee finches of varying colors are marvelous and delicate. These darlings come from India, the East Indies, Australia and tropical countries, and include St. Helena waxbills, the gray-blue finch, the orange finch, the strawberry finch, the mahogany finch, the chestnut and the zebra.

"These musicians excel in their wonderful art;
They have compass of voice and the gamut of heart."

This quotation applies to the Avadavat, with the head and under part of the body fiery red, tinged with black; tail black; wings a reddish brown; all the feathers are tipped with white, giving the birds the appearance of being speckled with white; beak red. The blue finch, or cordon bleu, is from Africa and is delightful when singing, dancing or cooing to himself. All of these tiny birds, with their ethereal colorings and silvery songs, fairly convince the poetical person that fairies are a reality. All the birds have their own special qualities of charm. I could not tell which ones I prefer,—my saucy, keen, devoted, song sparrow; timid, sensitive finches; joyous, playful linnets; mischievous magpies and blackbirds; loving, ardent, orioles and thrushes; tender, gentle, happy, loving, robbins, with their curiosity that is always leading them into danger and cats' paws; saucy, affectionate, treacherous, clever, imitative parroquets; or the canaries, gentlest of all house pets and almost as varying in their traits as species varies from species. Of these, there are the sweet-voiced Hollands; the affectionate Belgians; the erratic cinnamons; the nervous Hartz Mountain; the ragged St. Andreasberg; the green English, and, in fact, a great array of them, for fanciers have told me that there are fifty varieties.

People who do not make friends with birds miss the most marvelous joys earth offers and an indefinable connection with the mysterious infinities of space.

I have said I have no preferences but, in truth, I have, if I estimate according to the greatest pleasure derived from a single species. Yes, the robin is my choice, whether it be an English robin, an eastern robin of New

England, a western robin of California, a Japanese robin or an Indian robin, —all are remarkable birds. They are surprisingly human and very responsive to tender, affectionate care; so independent, yet clinging; so wise and merry and mischievous, and their curiosity, which I have previously mentioned, is most amusing.

"Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet, thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery."

All these robins would seem to be first cousins, no matter from what clime they come, nor the dissimilarity in coloring or appearance. The similar characteristics of temperament prevail and they enjoy much the same food. The Japanese robin, in his fondness for assorted fruit, affords the most notable exception. The other varieties care for berry fruits only, whereas the Japanese bird likes a regular tutti frutti salad, such as oranges, apples, berries, cherries and bananas mixed up together.

"Far from his chosen bowers of bloom,
He lives a prisoner, yet feels no gloom;
For his merry glance and his sprightly song
Tell plainly as words that he fears no wrong."

LORIOL M. V. LAMOUREUX.

JUNE FIELD TRIP was taken on Sunday, the 12th. The day was delightfully warm and sunny, and the gentle breeze which prevailed was laden with bird notes. Our walk started in the garden of the Hotel Claremont; thence, up the canyon and out along the ridge above the Tunnel Road.

However, for the San Francisco group, the bird list began on the Bay with Western, California and Bonaparte gulls and Hudsonian curlews.

Land birds encountered were: California quail, mourning dove, a hawk and flicker; Anna and Allen hummers, ashy-throated flycatcher and black phoebe; olive-sided flycatcher, wood pewee, western flycatcher and California jay; crow, meadowlark and Brewer blackbird; purple finch, linnet, green-backed goldfinch, Nuttall sparrow and junco; Bell sparrow family, song sparrow, San Francisco and California towhees; black-headed grosbeak, lazuli bunting, warbling vireo, lutescent and pileolated warblers; California thrasher, Vigors and house wrens; bush and wren tits and russet-backed thrush. Thirty-nine species.

After lunching among the pines on the ridge, the party separated, one group returning down the ridge to Claremont and the other traversing one of the higher trails along the south side of Strawberry canyon and on down to a rendezvous not far from the Sather Gate. The latter route was followed in the hope of a glimpse of the Bell sparrow and the persistent ones were rewarded by a view not only of Mr. Bell Sparrow, but also of Mrs. Bell and the two young Bells.

Visitors present were: Mesdames Baily and Howard and Parker Hoadley. Members in attendance were: Mesdemoiselles Ames, Applegarth, Baily, Cheesman, Flynn, King, Schroder, Stern and Van Gaasbeck; Mesdames Kibbe and Smith; Messrs. Baker, Kibbe, Smith, Thomas and Whipple. Sixteen members and three guests.

S. EDITH KING.

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

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